



## **MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** August 13, 2020

**Agenda Item:** 2021 Annual Work Plan for Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis

**Action Needed:** Proposed

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

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### **Background:**

In January 2013, the commission endorsed elk management recommendations from a citizen working group for use in areas with brucellosis (the Designated Surveillance Area as described by the Montana Department of Livestock). Annual work plans describe specific management actions based upon these recommendations. The proposed 2021 annual work plan includes the same aspects as the 2020 plan to include hazing, limited fencing, limited lethal removal of elk, habitat modifications, and other efforts to move elk away from cattle at small scales to reduce the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle. The proposed 2021 plan maintains previous landownership and date descriptions clarifying where and when elk may be lethally removed to move elk away from cattle. The proposed number of elk that may be taken is unchanged from 2020.

### **Public Involvement Process:**

The public comment opportunity for the proposed annual work plan will remain open from Aug. 13 through Sept. 14, 2020, at 5 p.m. The scheduled meeting of the Brucellosis Working Group on July 8, 2020 had to be postponed, but it should be rescheduled prior to final adoption of this plan in October 2020. Any relevant information from that working group will be considered.

### **Alternatives and Analysis:**

The proposal may be adopted as presented or with adjustment per department justifications, public comment, and commission discussion. Public comment will be reviewed and final plan amended as appropriate.

### **Agency Recommendation and Rationale:**

The department recommends approval of the proposed 2021 Annual Work Plan for Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis for public comment to obtain review of authorized management options to reduce or mitigate the risk of brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle.

### **Proposed Motion:**

I move that the commission vote to approve for public comment the proposed 2021 Annual Work Plan for Elk Management in Areas with Brucellosis as proposed by the department.